721
754
756 few puffs the weaker shaman would start to choke and would fall unconscious, perhaps with blood running from his nose. After a time the stronger shaman would call the weaker one's name and revive him; or, if this failed, the stronger one would sing the weaker shaman's wegeléyu song and shake his rattle over him. If, after three repetitions of the song, the weaker shaman was still unconscious, the stronger would blow water from his mouth onto the other's forehead. This apparently was always effective. Although Pete did not explicitly say so, the mechanism involved in this kind of shamanistic contest may involve the loss and return of the soul. The unconscious state and the bleeding nose are similar to the symptoms of the boy in the Welukúshkush story, the two curing ceremonies have a common element in the calling of the unconscious person's name. Paralysis or unconsciousness and a bleeding nose are reported by Lowie in cases that probably involve soul loss (1939, 322-3).

721
714
75

756 Contests among shamans were held regularly and not always as part
789 of the war pattern. Possibly they were a means by which shamans publicized their powers. Rupert reports that shamans were able to walk on hot coals and climb steep cliffs where there were no handholds. Rupert says a friend of his
[754] saw a shaman dance in fire and then vanish. According to Rupert, shamans
[755] also competed by magically shooting objects into one another. If a shaman failed to remove an object shot into him by another, it was understood that he was the weaker of the two. The stronger shaman would then remove the object, for contests among shamans were never a killing matter.

626 Both the threat of sorcery and the fear of an accusation of sorcery
754 were important patterns of social control among the Washo. These patterns usually operated among nonrelatives. Anyone could hire a sorcerer to cast a spell on an enemy; therefore, an individual would try to avoid trouble with others, even with those who were not particularly formidable, for anyone
626 could enlist aid. The activities of sorcerers were held in check because sor-
683 cerers were sometimes killed by angry relatives of the victim. If a sorcerer
754 became particularly troublesome, the Washo might reach a kind of general agreement that he should be killed. According to Pete, even the relatives of the sorcerer might agree that this was necessary. The killing was some-
[775] times by stoning and sometimes by other methods. The people who killed a sorcerer were not in danger from his ghost because ghosts bother only relatives. Rupert says he never heard of the ghost of a murdered man returning to trouble the murderer. Lowie's discussion of the measures taken to control sorcery (1939, 319-20) agrees with the statements of our informants.

754 Witches as well as sorcerers exist among the Washo. A sorcerer has
778 active control over his wegeléyu, whereas a witch is an old person whose gen-
838 eralized power (not wegeléyu) has become fairly strong with age. Sorcerers

Actually, the Washo seem to have held a dual conception of the shaman; he had the ability both to kill and to cure, and this coincided with the Washo view of the supernatural beings that inhabited nature. The Washo regarded their world as pervaded with power, which was a vague and enormous force embodied in a multitude of spirits. These spirits resided in natural and supernatural forms, such as birds, animals and "water-babies." Communion with these spirits came in dreams and provided the power by which a person could "exercise a possible measure of control over the fortunes and hazards of life" (Siskin, 1941, 27). To exercise this power and thus become a shaman was possible, however, only after a spirit presented itself to a neophyte, who cultivated it by proper training. Thus the vision quest was not practiced, though Downs notes that in actual practice it was probably a "conscious and voluntary act on the part of an individual" (1961, 370). In the case of children, Siskin quotes an informant as saying that one as young as seven years old could dream about a spirit, but he "will not know what it is all about" (1941, 41). A shaman, however, could recognize when a child had been visited and would entreat the spirit not to harm the child and to leave him until he had grown up.

Obtaining a spirit was looked upon as being both good and bad. Its entrance into a person was accompanied by sickness, and its instructions often produced physical hardships by demanding a rigorous pattern of behavior, including abstention from certain foods, during the training period. On the other hand, possession of a spirit gave its carrier powerful controls over his fellow man and his environment.

The possession of a spirit permitted an individual to become a shaman or so-called Indian doctor, with the ability to cure illnesses, but at the same time, he had the potential of practicing black magic and becoming a sorcerer. Indeed, the Washo did not terminologically distinguish between shaman and sorcerer, and the dual nature of this role was best exemplified in cases of illness. It was the responsibility of the Indian doctor to deal with all maladies. After performing a four day ritual of bringing his power to bear on the diseased object that had intruded the patient, the doctor would then extract the item. The reasons given for the cause of the disease were many, and included violation of ritual specifications connected with hunting, malevolence of ghosts, and contact with the dead. The most frequent reason given for illness, however, was witchcraft, which shamans were expected to cure since one of them was always thought responsible for the condition (Siskin, 1941, 140). This duality of the shamans was definitely considered to be weighted toward the negative side. More often than not a patient would die, and this was considered proof of the evil nature of shamans. The Washo believed that even if a shaman were to cure someone one day, this same person could be his victim the next. Siskin believed that "the feeling of apprehension and anxiety with regard to sorcery may be said to permeate the culture," and this also

applied to those Washo who had "achieved varying degrees of sophistication" (1941, 82). Elsewhere in his thesis he again says, "Every layman's testimony bristled with a cynical and resentful awareness of the grasping character of shamanistic practice" (1941, 121).

Siskin's main concern was with the reasons behind the rise and decline of the Peyote Cult during his period of study and its effect on the entrenched power of the shamans. The shamans seemed to have won the battle at that time, just as they had before when confronted with the Ghost Dances of 1870 and 1890, and when any budding temporal leader had challenged their domain. Though the shamans succeeded in having the Peyote Cult leaders expelled from Dresslerville, the main all-Washo community in Nevada, their victory had the appearance of being a Pyrrhic one, and Siskin predicted a short life for them. This indeed turned out to be the case. Whereas Siskin listed 10 known shamans in 1939 (1941, 28), only one remained when we studied the Washo during the summer of 1956, and he was trusted and not feared by anyone. In other words, the sole remaining shaman was "good" as opposed to the "bad" Indian doctors who practiced witchcraft.

The shamans, except for this one, and the concomitant fear of witchcraft, had been disposed of in a number of ways. The position of the Indian doctors was challenged by the entrance of the Peyote Cult during the 1930's, the period of Siskin's (1941) and Stewart's (1944) studies. The new movement promised cures and thus struck directly at the power of the shamans. Though the effect of Peyotism was not wholly responsible for the downfall of the shamans, this encroachment undoubtedly was the beginning of their decline. A few shamans were subsequently murdered, though my informants emphasized that their deaths were made to look like accidents, and others died of natural causes. This explicit evidence of sorcerers' being the objects of aggression clearly placed the role of witchcraft beliefs among the Washo in the same category as that found among the Navajo, Hopi, Saulteaux and Ifaluk.

The fact that the shamans' ranks were not refilled can be partially attributed to their beneficial "doctoring" functions' having been taken over by the Peyote Cult leaders, who lived near Dresslerville, as well as by white doctors. Nevertheless, one of the Peyote leaders reportedly visited the remaining shaman for treatment of certain illnesses thought to be peculiarly "Indian," and several Washo were convinced that some whites as well as Indians attended either the shaman or the white doctor depending on the type of illness. But it must be remembered that no one believed this particular Indian doctor would practice witchcraft. Witchcraft, then, had literally died out, and there was little indication in 1956 that it would be revived. Even the children of the remaining shaman were thought to be unable to obtain "power" because they did not know how to speak Washo, a prerequisite for becoming a shaman.